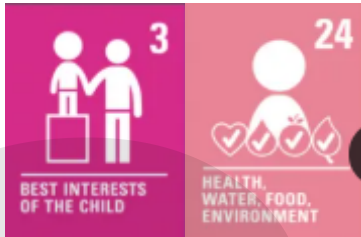


# WATER SAFELY

Enjoy Water **Safely**



## Water Safety: Inland Water Sites

Aim of PSHE this week is to know and understand the risks of inland water sites.



**Can you identify what these signs mean?**

**What could happen if we choose to ignore them?**

**What should we do if our friends ignore them?**

# Introduction

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Water safety is an important public health issue in Britain. While rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs, beaches, and swimming pools provide opportunities for recreation and exercise, they can also present significant risks. Drowning can happen quickly and often occurs unexpectedly, even to strong swimmers. Understanding water hazards and following basic safety guidance can save lives.

Accidental drownings occur in inland waterways such as rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs, and quarries rather than at the coast.

The highest number of accidental drowning deaths occur during warmer months, particularly in **May, July, and August**, when more people spend time near water.

Recreational activities accounted for more than half of accidental drowning incidents.

One of the greatest dangers in British waters is **cold water shock**. Even during hot weather, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs can remain below 16°C. Sudden immersion in cold water can cause involuntary gasping, rapid breathing, and panic, increasing the risk of drowning. Water safety experts regularly warn that many incidents occur when people enter open water to cool down during warm weather

# Key Water Safety Statistics for Britain (2026)

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The most recent UK water safety data available in 2026 shows that drowning remains a significant public safety issue, particularly in inland waterways such as rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs, and quarries.

## Recent 2026 Concerns

During the May 2026 heatwave, at least **15 people died in water-related incidents across the UK**, many of them children and teenagers. Water safety organisations reported that warm weather often encourages people to enter open water, while cold water temperatures can trigger **cold water shock**, a leading factor in drowning incidents.



Match these  
types of inland  
water sites

**Quarry**

**canal**

**lake**

**river**

**reservoir**





Match these  
types of inland  
water sites

**Quarry**

**canal**

**lake**

**river**

**reservoir**



# Out of curiosity... What's the difference?

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**Canal:** A man made water way, traditionally used to transport heavy goods for sale

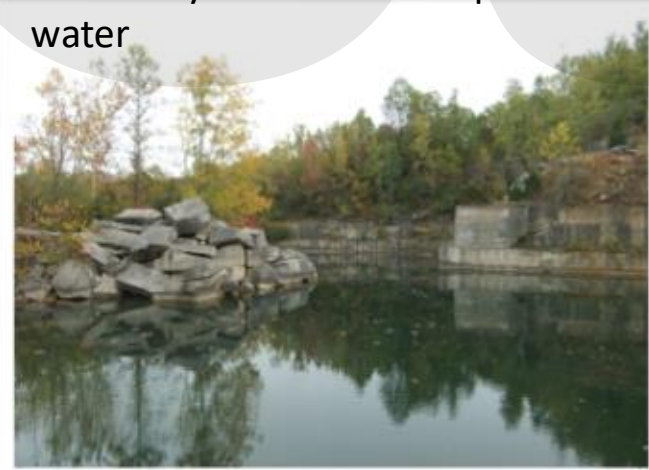
**Lake:**  
A naturally occurring inland body of water usually in a basin, surrounded by dry land



**Quarry:** A huge pit where stone may have been mined from and over the years it is filled up with water

**Reservoir:** A man made lake where water is stored

**River:** Naturally flowing water course



# Inland Water Sites

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Over half of drownings occur at inland water sites which include rivers, lakes, quarries, reservoirs and canals.

That's over 200 drownings every year!

Many of these drowning occur because people assume that swimming or jumping into open water is similar to using a swimming pool.

Open water can be used safely, but there are a lot more things to consider when going into open water compared to a swimming pool

Whenever you are near water:

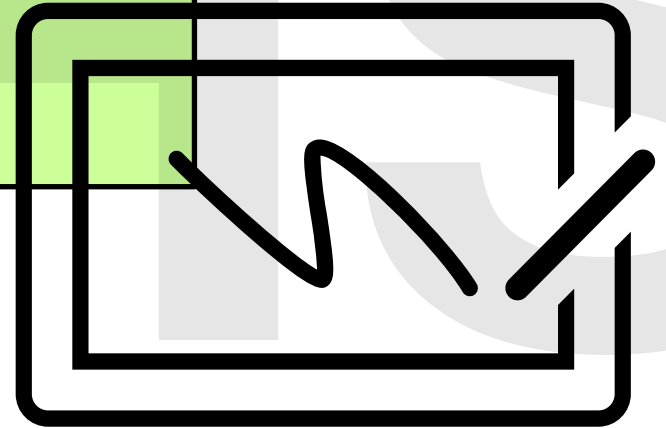
- Stop and Think
  - Stay Together
- In an emergency:**
- Call 999
  - Float

# Discuss

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Think about three risks that you may experience at an inland water site.



Here are some of the risks:-

- Drowning
- Hypothermia
- Hidden items – boulders / tree trunks we can't see
- Currents
- Unpredictable weather
- Lack of parental / adult supervision
- Lack of lifeguards
- Contaminated water (stomach upsets)
- Wildlife
- Hard to climb out, rugged edges

# Cold Water

Enjoy Water **Safely**



Even during the summer the open water sites stay very cold, particularly the deeper water just a few metres from the shore.

If you want to swim, try to enter from somewhere shallow, and swim parallel with the shore so you can stand up if you start to feel tired or if you inhale water.

If you're going into deeper water, or jumping in, it's a good idea to go with an organised group with rescue cover, get used to the temperature first, and wear a wetsuit.



# Cold Water

Enjoy Water **Safely**



After the gasping and hyperventilation response to getting into cold water has passed (0-3mins), how much can cold water reduce your ability to swim?

A research study took 10 good swimmers and asked them to swim in water of 25°C, 18°C, and 10°C for 90mins.

How many do you think completed the swims:

Water Temperature	Number of swimmers who completed the swim
25°C	10
18°C	8
10°C	5

How long can you swim continuously for in a standard 30°C swimming pool?

Considering the standard of the swimmers in the research, how long do you think you could swim in 10°C water?

If you are not experienced swimming in cold water, it's probably just a couple of minutes

# Identify the Hazards at Open Water Sites

CANAL

LAKE

QUARRY

RESERVOIR

RIVER

END  
ACTIVITY

Produced for RLSS UK by



Back

Forward

Exit

# Canal

Hazards:  
4 to find!



**Resetting Hazards**

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

# Canal

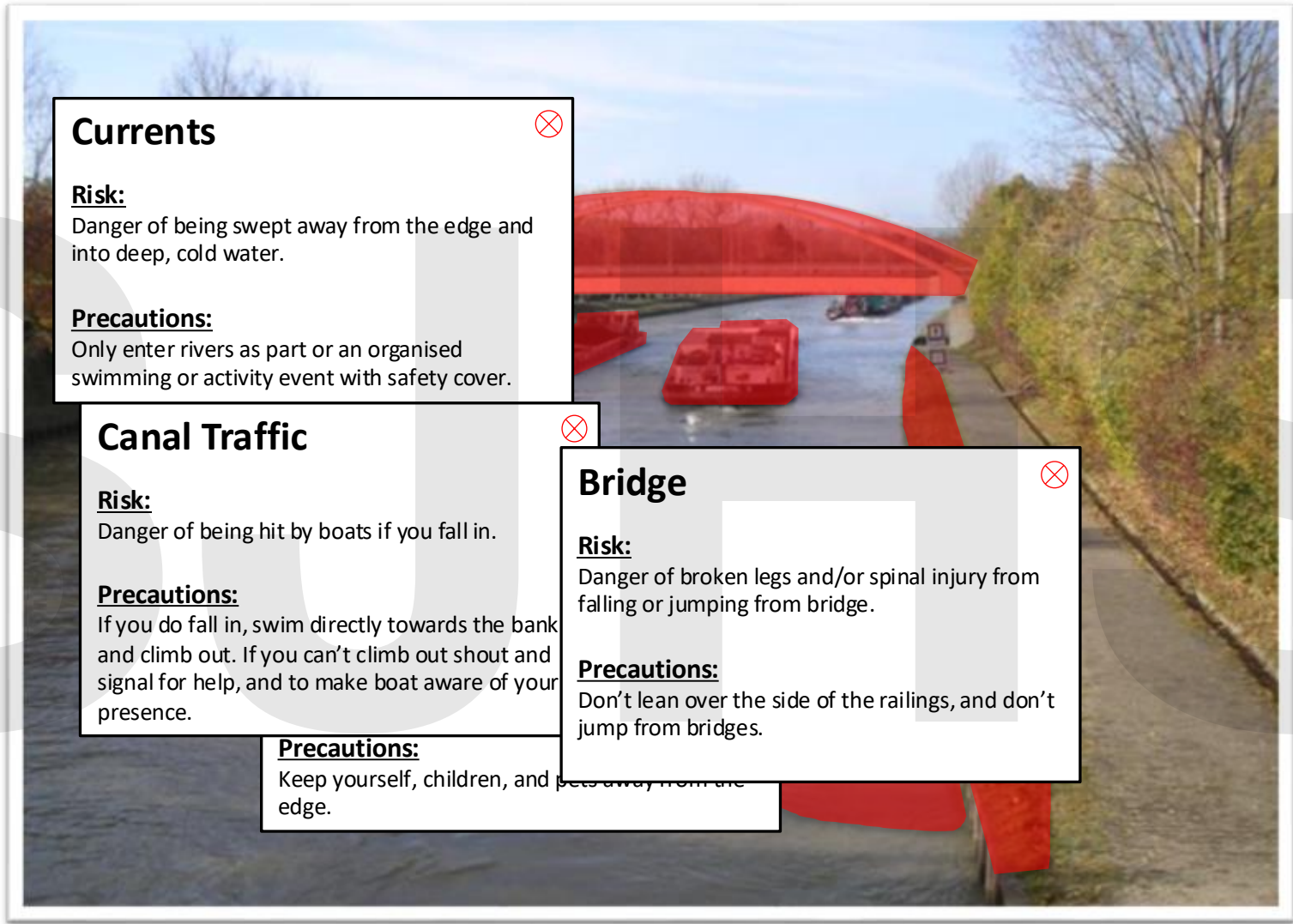
Hazards:  
4 to find!

Canal  
Traffic

Currents

Bridge

Bank



## Currents

### Risk:

Danger of being swept away from the edge and into deep, cold water.

### Precautions:

Only enter rivers as part of an organised swimming or activity event with safety cover.

## Canal Traffic

### Risk:

Danger of being hit by boats if you fall in.

### Precautions:

If you do fall in, swim directly towards the bank and climb out. If you can't climb out shout and signal for help, and to make boat aware of your presence.

### Precautions:

Keep yourself, children, and pets away from the edge.

## Bridge

### Risk:

Danger of broken legs and/or spinal injury from falling or jumping from bridge.

### Precautions:

Don't lean over the side of the railings, and don't jump from bridges.

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

# Lake

Hazards:  
4 to find!



Reveal All

Reset

← Menu

Exit

# Lake

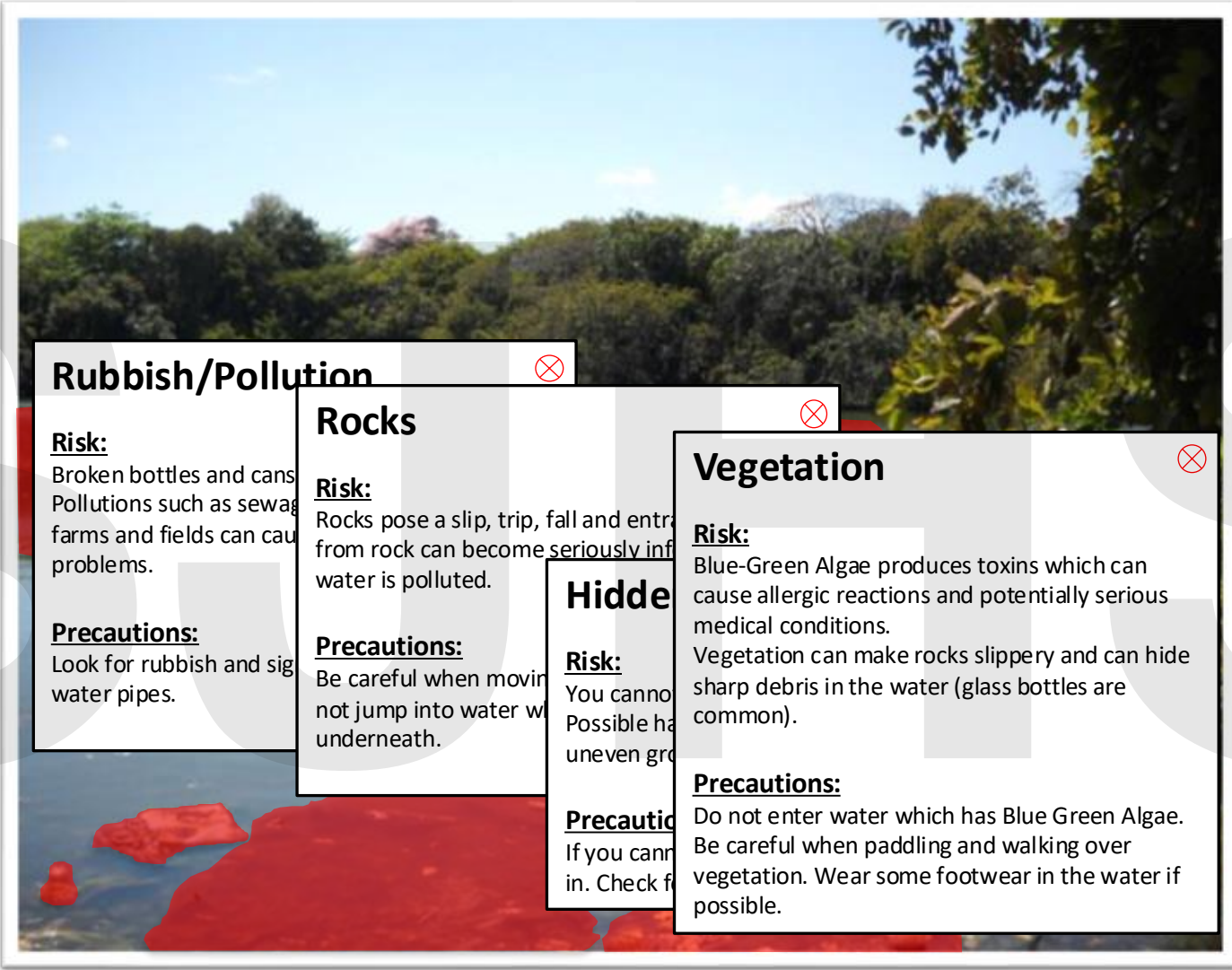
Hazards:  
4 to find!


Rocks

Vegetation

Rubbish/  
Pollution


Hidden  
Features



**Rubbish/Pollution** 

**Risk:**  
Broken bottles and cans  
Pollutions such as sewage  
farms and fields can cause  
problems.

**Precautions:**  
Look for rubbish and signs  
water pipes.

**Rocks** 


**Risk:**  
Rocks pose a slip, trip, fall and entrapment hazard. Entrapment from rock can become seriously injurious if water is polluted.

**Precautions:**  
Be careful when moving rocks. Do not jump into water without checking underneath.

**Hidden Features**

**Risk:**  
You cannot see sharp debris or uneven ground.

**Precautions:**  
If you cannot see sharp debris or uneven ground, do not enter the water.

**Vegetation** 

**Risk:**  
Blue-Green Algae produces toxins which can cause allergic reactions and potentially serious medical conditions.  
Vegetation can make rocks slippery and can hide sharp debris in the water (glass bottles are common).

**Precautions:**  
Do not enter water which has Blue Green Algae. Be careful when paddling and walking over vegetation. Wear some footwear in the water if possible.

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

# Quarry

Hazards:  
6 to find!



Reveal All

Reset

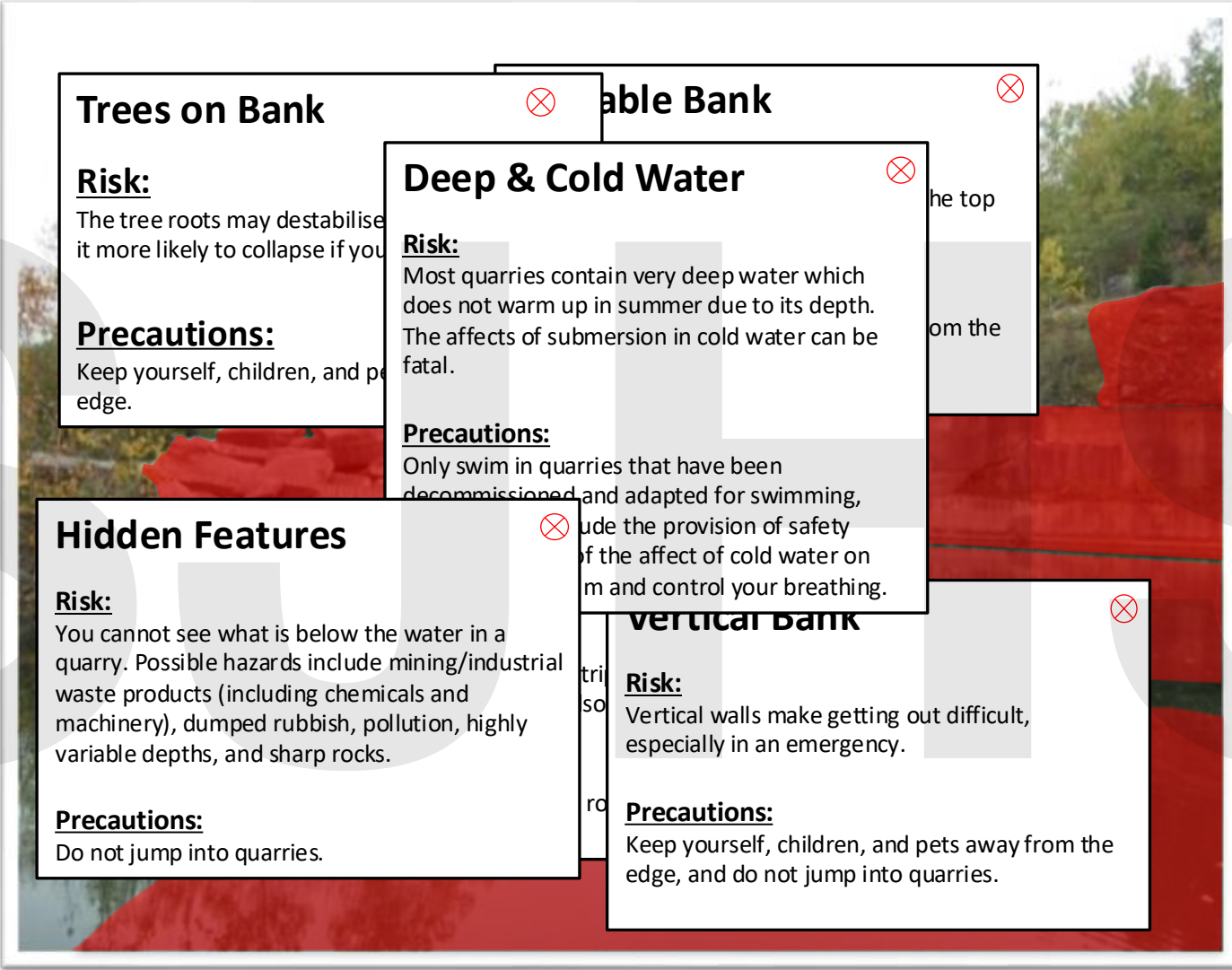
← Menu

Exit

# Quarry

Hazards:  
6 to find!

- Rocks
- Unstable bank
- Underwater current
- Hidden features
- Shear face
- Trees on bank



## Trees on Bank

**Risk:**  
The tree roots may destabilise the bank, making it more likely to collapse if you are near the edge.

**Precautions:**  
Keep yourself, children, and pets away from the edge.

## Unstable Bank

**Risk:**  
Most quarries contain very deep water which does not warm up in summer due to its depth. The effects of submersion in cold water can be fatal.

**Precautions:**  
Only swim in quarries that have been decommissioned and adapted for swimming, and include the provision of safety equipment to protect from the affect of cold water on breathing. Swim slowly and control your breathing.

## Hidden Features

**Risk:**  
You cannot see what is below the water in a quarry. Possible hazards include mining/industrial waste products (including chemicals and machinery), dumped rubbish, pollution, highly variable depths, and sharp rocks.

**Precautions:**  
Do not jump into quarries.

## Vertical Bank

**Risk:**  
Vertical walls make getting out difficult, especially in an emergency.

**Precautions:**  
Keep yourself, children, and pets away from the edge, and do not jump into quarries.

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

# Reservoir

Hazards:  
3 to find!



Reveal All

Reset

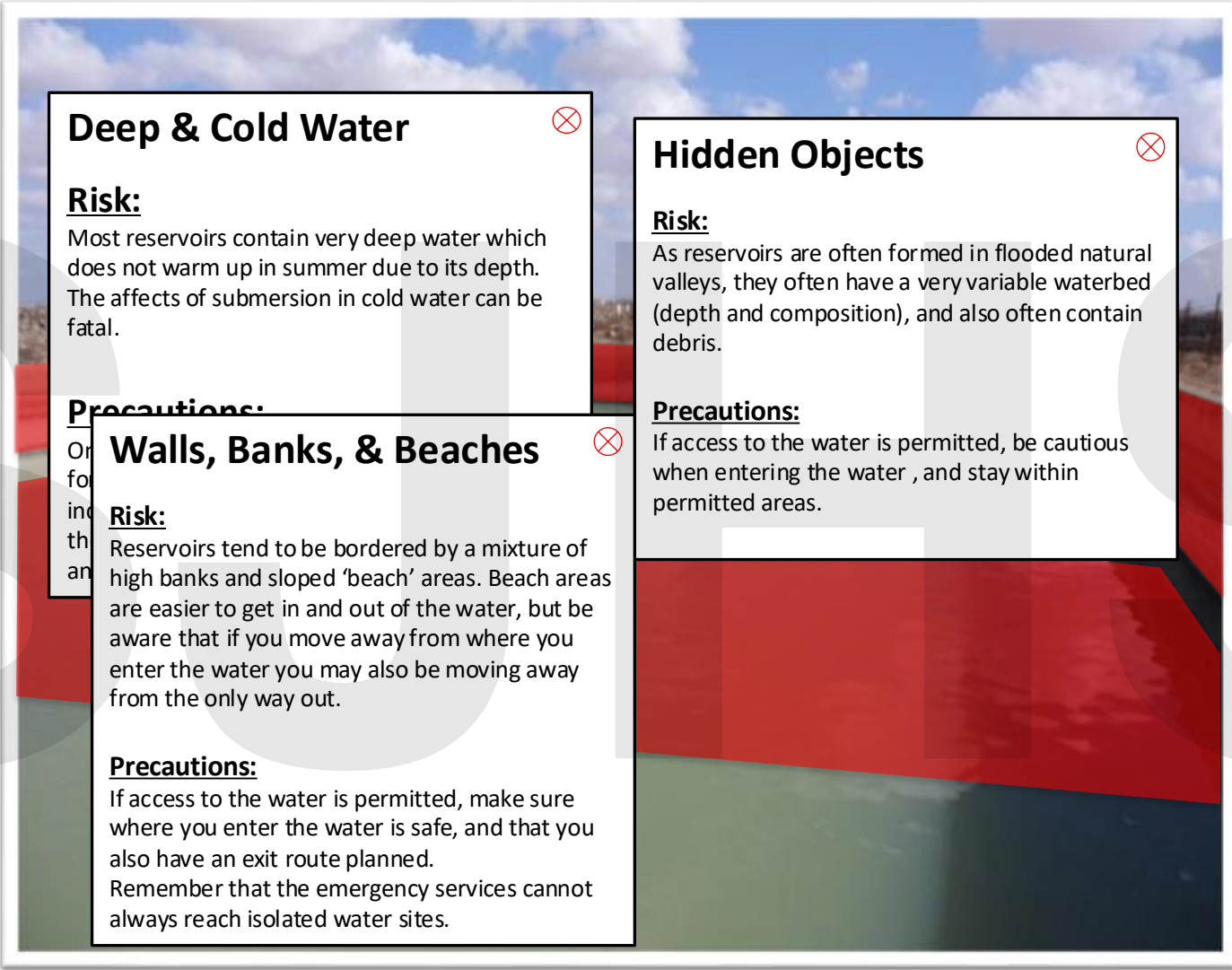
← Menu


Exit

# Reservoir

Hazards:  
3 to find!


- Hidden objects
- Cold water
- Shear Wall



**Deep & Cold Water** 


**Risk:**  
Most reservoirs contain very deep water which does not warm up in summer due to its depth. The affects of submersion in cold water can be fatal.

**Precautions:**

**Hidden Objects** 

**Risk:**  
As reservoirs are often formed in flooded natural valleys, they often have a very variable waterbed (depth and composition), and also often contain debris.

**Precautions:**  
If access to the water is permitted, be cautious when entering the water , and stay within permitted areas.

**Walls, Banks, & Beaches** 

**Risk:**  
Reservoirs tend to be bordered by a mixture of high banks and sloped 'beach' areas. Beach areas are easier to get in and out of the water, but be aware that if you move away from where you enter the water you may also be moving away from the only way out.

**Precautions:**  
If access to the water is permitted, make sure where you enter the water is safe, and that you also have an exit route planned. Remember that the emergency services cannot always reach isolated water sites.

Reveal All

Reset

← Menu

Exit

# River

Hazards:  
8 to find!



**Resetting Hazards**

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

# River

Hazards:

8 to find!

Hidden objects

Cold water

Currents

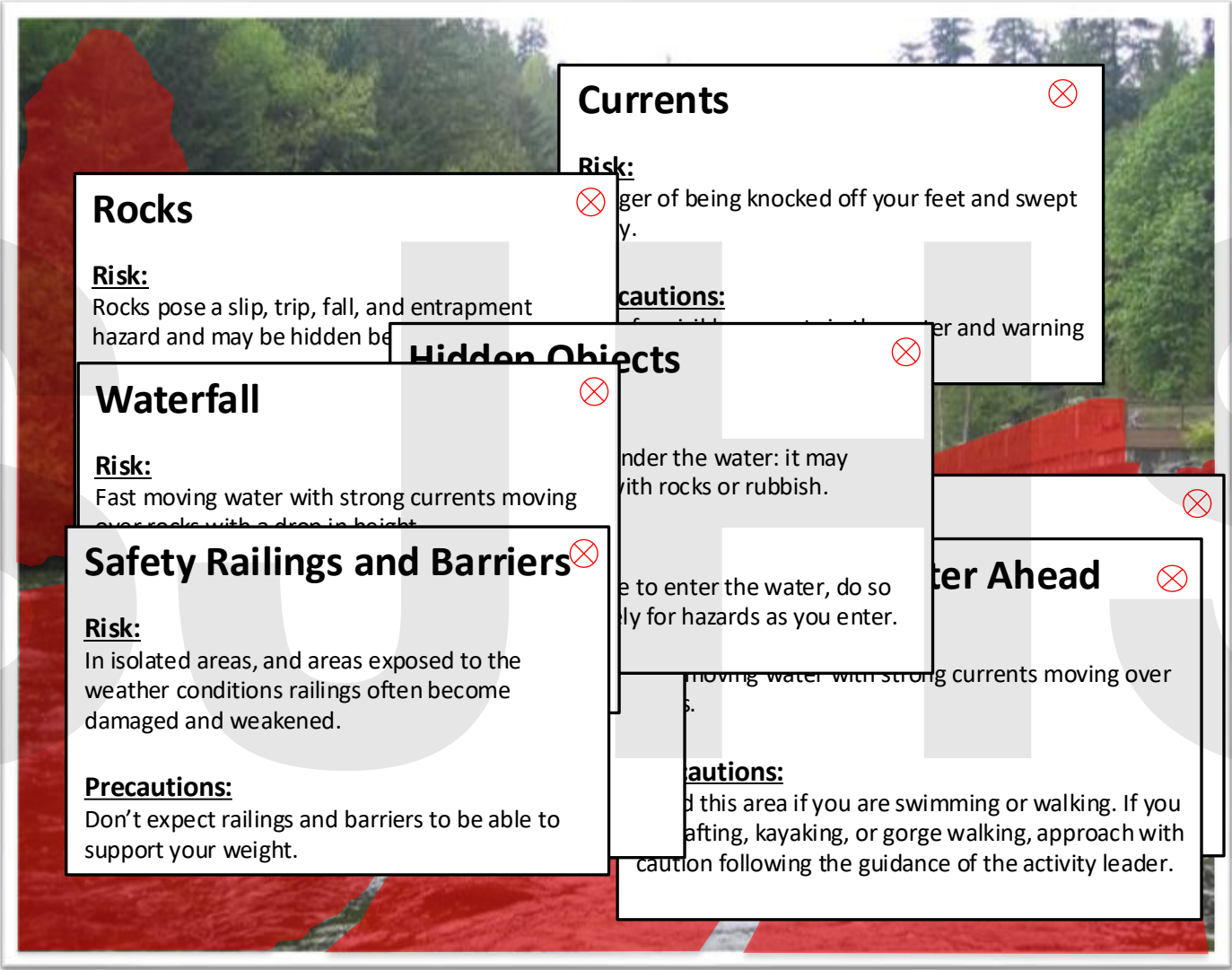
Rocks


White water


Waterfall


Railings


Trees on bank





**Rocks**   
Risk:  
Rocks pose a slip, trip, fall, and entrapment hazard and may be hidden beneath the water.

**Waterfall**   
Risk:  
Fast moving water with strong currents moving over rocks with a drop in height.

**Safety Railings and Barriers**   
Risk:  
In isolated areas, and areas exposed to the weather conditions railings often become damaged and weakened.  
Precautions:  
Don't expect railings and barriers to be able to support your weight.

**Currents**   
Risk:  
Danger of being knocked off your feet and swept away.  
Precautions:  
Approach with caution and warning.

**Hidden Objects**   
Under the water: it may be difficult to see rocks or rubbish.

**Water Ahead**   
Fast moving water with strong currents moving over rocks.  
Precautions:  
Avoid this area if you are swimming or walking. If you are rafting, kayaking, or gorge walking, approach with caution following the guidance of the activity leader.

Reveal All

Reset

Menu

Exit

## Safety Advice for Swimming

- **Look out for depth markers** — they tell you how deep the water is at that point.
- Only dive off the diving board. The water may be shallower than you think. If you hit the bottom . . . ouch! You might get knocked out or you could hurt your neck very badly.
- Swim with a buddy.
- Walk slowly in the pool area. Don't run.
- Swim at a depth that is safe for you. If you're just learning to swim, stay in the shallow end.
- Don't push or jump on others. You could accidentally hurt someone or yourself.
- Toys to help you float come in many shapes and sizes (an inner tube, air mattress, or beach ball, for example). Although they're fun and can help you while you learn to swim, what they **can't** do is save a life. They're toys that can lose air or float away.
- Don't chew gum or eat while you swim — you could choke.

# *water safety tips*



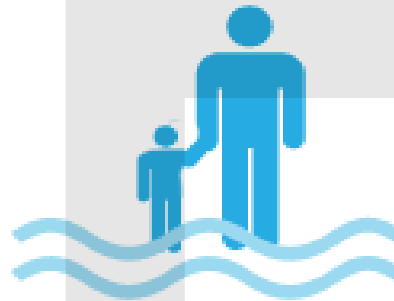
Swim in lifeguard-supervised beaches and pools.



Put up barriers around the pool or hot tub.



Always swim with a buddy. Even experienced swimmers can tire or get muscle cramps.



Keep an eye out on children around water. Stay within reach.



Learn proper swimming and safety skills.



Wear a life jacket while boating.



# Water Safety Summary

Enjoy Water **Safely**



## Key Safety Message

- Many inland waters in Britain remain **15°C or colder even during summer**, which is cold enough to cause cold water shock. Water safety experts advise people to:
  - Choose supervised swimming locations.
  - Never swim alone.
  - Avoid jumping into unknown water.
  - If you unexpectedly enter deep water, **float on your back, relax, and control your breathing** until help arrives.